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SUBJECT: AMBASSADOR MEETS WITH PRESIDENT MILLS

Classified By: POLCHIEF GPERGL FOR REASONS 1.4 b&d

¶1. (C) Ambassador met January 16 with President John Atta-Mills, who had requested a meeting the day before. Mills was alone in his office for the meeting, which he had made clear was to establish a personal relationship with the Ambassador.

¶2. (C) In the midst of background media noise over the past few days in which some NDC party members have been taking President Mills to task for not purging District Assemblies of holdovers from the Kufuor administration and not acting decisively in making appointments, Mills told the Ambassador that he would proceed at his own pace. "I am a lawyer by training," he said, "and I am deliberate because I want to make sure that we are making the right decisions." He said that he had already told those who were trying to exert pressure on him through the media that they were wasting their time, that he would not be swayed from doing what was best for the country just to respond to a public outcry. he also noted that he would not cave in to pressure to reciprocate perceived slights to the NDC during the NPP's tenure, despite pressure from some in his party. (Read: Former President Rawlings).

¶3. (C) Mills also discussed his well-publicized meeting on January 15 with the CEO of Kosmos International, the American firm that has made significant discoveries in the Jubilee Oil Fields off Ghana's coast. He appeared to be pleased with the meeting, and told Ambassador that his primary objective is that any petroleum agreements and contracts be handled with utmost transparency. The Ghanaian people must be able to see clearly what is happening with any oil revenues, he said.

¶4. (C) Although the new government had made plans to send Vice President John Mahama to the Obama inauguration next week, Mills noted that Ghana would instead be represented by its Ambassador in Washington. (NOTE: Embassy found out that the VP visit was turned off late yesterday, presumably in response to the Department and Mission suggestions that it was not appropriate. END NOTE) Ambassador told Mills that even though both Presidents would likely be seized by domestic economic issues in the early days of their administrations, he would be proposing that Washington consider a high-level meeting relatively early, a prospect President Mills welcomed.

¶5. (C) Mills spent a fair amount of time reminiscing about his student days at Stanford and the time he spent teaching at Temple University. It was clearly a time he remembers fondly, and he contrasted the warmth of the students he met at Stanford to the more reserved academic atmosphere he had encountered in the UK where he earned his first post-graduate degree.

¶6. (C) In closing, Ambassador promised Mills that he would be honest and forthright in communicating with him, even if

President Mills might not always like the message. Mills replied that he cherished the truth, and that the Ambassador would not be assisting him if he did not provide an honest assessment. Ambassador once again congratulated Mills on his election, and emphasized that the new President would enjoy the full support of the US government. Mills in return thanked the US for its continuing support, and said that he hoped that the he and the Ambassador would be able to stay in close contact in the coming years.

7.(C) Comment: President Mills meeting alone may indicate that he is still not fully confident of all of his staff. We believe he very much intends to be his own man, which may lead to an altercation at some point with Former President Rawlings.

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